

war, not a war of violence. We are losing this war. Addicts continue to suffer needlessly every day. Those who would benefit from medical marijuana are continually forced to violate the law or to live their lives in pain.

We can do better as a Nation. Many States are leading the way, and we at the Federal level need to pursue the direction that has been followed by an increasing number of States, and we need to regulate the use of marijuana in a way that is compassionate, that discourages usage among minors, and we need to make sure that we have a health aspect in dealing with addiction where it exists.

WHEN AND HOW WILL AMERICA GET BACK TO WORK?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and come before this body to talk about something that I think is a key question that the American people have. We are dealing with a lot of weighty issues these days—Afghanistan, Libya, the debt ceiling, the Tax Code and tax reform—but I believe the key question that we have before us is and the key question that the American people have for us is:

When and how will America get back to work?

Mr. Speaker, it's far more than just creating a bill and labeling it "job creation bill" or a whole package of those or a stimulus package of government spending that, frankly, hasn't worked and even admitted to and joked about by the President recently when he said those shovel-ready jobs and those shovel-ready projects maybe weren't so shovel-ready.

No, they weren't.

But it's far more than just creating a bill and labeling it "job creation." It's about creating an atmosphere for private sector growth.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the private sector creates prosperity, not the government sector. The government sector can give a job, but the private sector creates wealth and creates prosperity, and it's not just in our Tax Code and how that's being applied; it's also in the regulatory atmosphere that we present to those job creators.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this House is trying to inject some reasonableness into a system that has gone awry. Whether it's the EPA creating out of whole cloth regulations that we have not dictated should happen or whether it's the National Labor Relations Board coming up with hurdle after hurdle for these job creators, this administration has continually overstepped the bounds of reasonableness, and it's our job, Mr. Speaker, to rein that in. You would think with 429,000 new jobless claims last week—let me repeat that—with 429,000 new jobless claims we would try to more aggressively

create a better climate and change that atmosphere. I can tell you we're trying to do that here in the House. We just need some partners across the other side of the Capitol and in the administration as well.

Recently, the House Republicans had an opportunity to meet with the President at the White House. My good friend and chairman of the Small Business and Job Creators Caucus, of which I'm a member, my friend from Wisconsin, REID RIBBLE, got up and indicated to the President that we need to do three things for success.

One, we need to have consumer confidence. That means, whether they're the people up in the balcony or those who are watching on TV right now, with the money that they have in their pockets, they feel confident enough that they're going to have a little extra, that they can go out and spend some money on an appliance or on a car, which is very important for those of us from Michigan, or maybe on a vacation. We need to have some consumer confidence, and they don't have that right now.

The other thing is we need to have credit available to those small business creators, those job creators, who are out there, who are cash-flowing, who are continuing to make those tough decisions to stay in the black, but they're now finding out that they can't access credit because of the unreasonable regulations that the Dodd-Frank banking bill has put in front of them.

Lastly and thirdly and maybe most importantly, we need certainty. We need a stability that has not been there for a number of years now. We need stability in our Tax Code. We need stability in our regulations. People basically need to know what the rules of the game are so that they can make long-term business decisions to again create those jobs. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why I support the House's plan for American job creators, and I encourage you to go to my Web site "Huizenga.house.gov" to see more about that.

Again, it's not just about a bill that's labeled "job creation." It's about an attitude that we need to have. In this package, we know that we need to remove redtape and the excessive regulations that are out there. We know that we need to expand American domestic energy production. That's a "must do" for us. We need to fix and streamline our Tax Code. We need to expand new markets abroad for the goods that our manufacturers make.

But again, Mr. Speaker, it's not just a bill. It's an attitude. We need to have an attitude of, "Yes, we will work with you to help create those jobs," not, "No, it doesn't matter what your question is. The answer is 'no.' We are not going to help."

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That, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, has been the dominant attitude of this administration and of this government, and it's time that we change that.

IT IS TIME TO FOCUS ON NATION-BUILDING HERE AT HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The United States' objective in Afghanistan was to root out, destroy, al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and their Taliban hosts. That job is done. Afghanistan has been superseded now as a haven for terrorists by tribal areas in Pakistan, Yemen, and Sudan. The inter- and intratribal disputes in Afghanistan are rooted in ancient history, and 12 to 36 more months of a large U.S. troop footprint is not going to resolve centuries-old conflicts among the Afghan tribes. There never has been, there never will be, a strong central government in Afghanistan.

So I disagree with the President's plan for a snail-pace partial drawdown of U.S. troops over the next few years. We should do it much more quickly and leave only a residual force to prevent a terrorist takeover. There were only a few thousand troops there when we drove out the Taliban and when we pursued Osama bin Laden. Unfortunately, we lost an early opportunity to capture and kill him because of mistakes by then-Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

But that being done, the President did say something last night with which I strongly agree. He said, America, it is time to focus on nation-building here at home. I couldn't agree more. I've been trying to do that for the last 2½ years but running into roadblocks down at the White House when I try and rebuild the Nation's transportation infrastructure.

Now, let's just think for a minute. We're borrowing and spending \$120 billion a year in Afghanistan, both to support our troops and to engage in nation-building, building them schools, building them highways, building them bridges, while our own schools, our own highways, our own bridges are crumbling and collapsing; \$120 billion borrowed and spent in Afghanistan, what could we do with that here at home?

We could begin to address the backlog of 150,000 bridges on our national highway system that need repair or replacement; the \$70 billion backlog on our transit systems for basic capital maintenance, let alone new investment in new transit systems to more efficiently transport our people; to deal with the 40 percent of the pavement on the national highway system that's substandard; to deal with congestion in our major cities and our ports; to move freight and Americans more effectively.

And in addressing that with \$120 billion that we're borrowing and spending in Afghanistan today and instead spending that money here at home, we could put over 3 million to work, not just construction workers. People say to me, well, Congressman, I don't work in construction. It's not just construction. We have the strongest buy-America requirement in transportation of

any part of the government. That means when you buy a transit vehicle, it's going to be made in America. That's manufacturing, that's software, that's engineering, design. It goes all across the economy. It's small business suppliers, minority suppliers under the laws. We could put millions to work and stimulate our economy if that money were spent here.

Last week, I confronted the President's deputy economic adviser, Mr. Furman, over these issues; and he did admit that instead of more tax cuts, which isn't putting anybody back to work—that's their one nostrum which seems to have been adopted by the Obama administration—hasn't worked for a decade, but if we cut them even more, that will then. It doesn't work. Investment works. We know it works. Let's invest. But the President's deputy economic adviser said we can't do that, we can't get the money to do that, but we can do a Social Security tax holiday and borrow \$200 billion more and not put people back to work.

Come on. Let's follow up on what the President said last night. Let's get serious about it, and let's make the investments here. America, it is time to focus on nation-building here at home and put our people back to work and ensure prosperity for future generations.

JOB CREATORS IN TEXAS "JUST SAY NO" TO MORE GOVERNMENT HELP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Good morning, America. President Reagan once said the nine most terrifying words in the English language were: I'm from the government and I'm here to help.

Recently, I met with job creators, small businesses and mid-size businesses in my east Texas district to talk about jobs, and I wish the President would have been with me to listen to the men and women who create jobs in my district, and they're like the men and women who create jobs across America. In meeting after meeting, job creators in my district made their voices heard loud and clear. They don't want another Washington jobs bill. They don't want government that taxes more, spends more, regulates more, and borrows more. They aren't looking to Washington for more incentives or tools to start hiring.

Want more jobs, they ask? Then get your finances in order and get Washington out of the way of our economic recovery. They want this Congress to cut now and cut deep, and when this Congress thinks it's cut enough wasteful and nonessential government spending, they want this Congress to cut more. In other words, they want their lawmakers to do what it takes to get our Nation back on sound footing.

In Willis, city council member Anna Ross asked, We're making the tough

choices in our city budget. When will the Federal Government do the same?

At the Conroe Rotary Club, Angela Allen told me she wants Washington to pay down the debt, go after fraud in Medicare, and above all, get out of the way of our job creators.

In Orange, Texas, small businesspeople flat out rejected more borrowed stimulus. They insist Congress not raise the debt ceiling unless we begin cutting up Washington's credit cards.

And local hospital administrator Jarren Garrett said it as bluntly as can be: Control spending.

In Huntsville, Texas, I heard how concerned people over our huge job-killing Tax Code. Sandra Sherman not only wants us to stop the spending. She wants government out of so many areas of our lives from housing, and banking, and medicine, and energy, insurance, and other sectors.

E.V. Blissard sent a loud message that we should not give in to the big spenders. E.V. is right. We can't give up the fight for a fair tax or to save Medicare and Social Security for our young people.

I heard that same message in Livingston, Texas, and New Caney, Texas, where they said forcing fewer and fewer taxpayers to carry more and more of the Federal Government burden is a sure way to kill the golden goose of prosperity.

Fear and uncertainty of what's coming next from Washington, including higher taxes, higher health care costs, higher energy costs is keeping these employers from putting out that "Help Wanted" sign we're all looking for.

In every town hall, roundtable, and civic club in my district the four letter word on the lips of everyone's tongue was "debt." Mr. President, in Texas the businesses that can help America pull out of its economic slump say it's time to cut up America's credit cards and end the spending spree in Washington. They will tell you if Washington doesn't back away from the cliff of more debt, more spending, more regulation, and more taxes, they fear we might cease to recognize our great Nation in the future.

Today, 2 years after that economic recovery supposedly started years after we spent \$820 billion against our Republican objections, that stimulus, we have fewer Americans working today than when the stimulus began, one-half million fewer people working than when all that stimulus was supposed to jump-start the economy. Manufacturing is down, factory orders are down, consumer confidence is down. We were promised our unemployment rate right now would be 6½ percent. Well, it is almost 9 percent. We have the largest number of people out of work, unemployed. It's almost at historic levels. We have fewer people working today than almost a quarter of a century ago, fewer people in the workforce in almost a generation.

The stimulus failed. It is time for a new approach. It's time to listen to the

job creators. What they really did like, by the way, was the Republican plan for America's job creators to get the Tax Code out of the way of our small business people, to get higher energy and health care costs out of the way of our job creators. They want to lower the barriers so America competes and finds new customers around the world, get those barriers out of the way, and they want a better business climate, more patent reform, more lawsuit reform, get those extra costs out of the way of our small businesses, and they want us to get our financial house in order.

□ 1100

Mr. President, get out of the White House, listen to our job creators. They don't want more government jobs bills. They want you and this Congress out of the way of what they know they want to do. And with that, we will bring jobs, bring the unemployment rate down, and bring us back to the strongest economy in the world, not just for a few years but for the entire century.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members that remarks in debate must be addressed to the Chair.

THANKING THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD FOR ITS LEADERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the National Labor Relations Board for moving in a direction with a recent proposed change that will actually strengthen a worker's ability in the United States to unite, to work within a system that has more transparency, that is fairer, that is streamlined so that we can return a little bit more power here in the United States of America to the worker.

Representing a district in northeast Ohio and cities like Akron and Youngstown, and in a region that includes Cleveland and Canton and is not too far from Pittsburgh, we have had a long, proud history in our region of a strong middle class that, in many ways, was provided by union representation, to bring some balance to an economic system, quite frankly, right now that is run by major global multinational interests that will do whatever is necessary to drive down wages for average workers.

I love this economic theory that we hear many times from our friends on the other side that if the minimum wage just wasn't so high, if workers just weren't making as much money, that maybe the economy would start humming. Let's reduce taxes on the wealthiest people in the United States